CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claim Amendment Summary

Claims pending

- Before this Amendment: Claims 1-36.
- After this Amendment: Claims 1-36.

Non-Elected, Canceled, or Withdrawn claims: None

Amended claims: 1, 21, 23 and 30-36.

New claims: None

Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

selecting pixels to be used as an emoticon;

assigning a character sequence to the pixels; and

transmitting a text message including the character sequence to a destination to allow for reconstruction of the pixels at the destination, wherein the emoticon is to be substituted for the character sequence within the text message.

2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pixels comprise a pixel array of pre-determined dimensions.

3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pixels comprise a 19 x 19 pixel grid.

4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the character sequence allows real-time mapping to the pixels.

5. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising parsing the character sequence into an object name for the pixels, wherein the object name includes an identifier of the pixels and a location of the pixels.

6. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising transmitting the character sequence in a real-time first communication; and

transmitting data representing the pixels in a second communication, wherein the data reconstructs the pixels in place of the character sequence in the real-time first communication.

7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the data comprises a portable network graphics file.

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

parsing the character sequence into an identifier and a location of the pixels; and

storing the identifier and the location in a header of a message that includes the character sequence.

9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the identifier and the location comprise at least parts of an object name for the pixels.

10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the object name is stored in a header of the message.

11. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transmitting uses at least one of an object store and an object transport mechanism.

12. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transmitting comprises instant messaging.

13. (Original) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the instant messaging has a limited data capacity that excludes including data representing

the pixels in a single instant message that also includes data representing a threshold amount of text.

14. (Original) A method, comprising:

receiving a communication, wherein the communication includes a character sequence mappable to a pixel array residing outside the communication;

retrieving the pixel array using the character sequence; and

replacing the character sequence in the communication with the pixel array.

15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the communication includes a header storing at least one of an identifier of the pixel array and a location of the pixel array.

16. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the identifier and the location comprise at least part of an object name for the pixel array.

17. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the retrieving further includes mapping to a local storage medium to determine if the pixel array has been previously stored in the local storage medium.

18. (Original) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the local storage medium comprises a cache of temporary files used by a web browser.

19. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the retrieving further includes:

checking for the pixel array on a local storage medium;

if the pixel array is not located in the local storage medium, then attempting to establish a direct link with a sender of the communication to retrieve the pixel array from a storage medium associated with the sender; and

if a direct link to the sender cannot be established, then retrieving the pixel array through a server between the sender of the communication and the recipient of the communication.

20. (Original) The method as recited in claim 19, wherein the direct link comprises a peer-to-peer connection using one of a transmission control protocol or a user datagram protocol.

21. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:

a means for performing real-time communication between a first computing client and a second computing client;

a means for sending a real-time first communication that includes a character sequence representing the graphics data of an emoticon;

a means for sending the graphics data of the emoticon in a second ~~separate~~ communication from the first communication; and

a means for replacing the character sequence in the real-time first communication with the graphics data from the second communication.

22. (Original) The system as recited in claim 21, further comprising a means for adapting images of various sizes and formats to a pixel array format of predetermined size for use as the graphics data of emoticons.

23. (Currently Amended) A custom emoticon engine having at least one physical component in a computing device, the custom emoticon engine comprising:

an image selector to create an emoticon from an image, wherein the emoticon is representable as pixels;

a character sequence assignor to associate a sequence of characters with the pixels; and

a transmitter to send the character sequence in a text message to a destination, wherein the pixels replace the character sequence within the text message at the destination.

24. (Original) The custom emoticon engine, as recited in claim 23, further comprising a user interface wherein a first dialogue is deployed to define custom emoticons and a second dialogue is deployed to create real-time messages to include the character sequences associated with the custom emoticons.

25. (Original) The custom emoticon engine, as recited in claim 23, further comprising a custom emoticons object store to transfer data of custom emoticons separately from the real-time messages that include the character sequences.

26. (Original) The custom emoticon engine, as recited in claim 23, further comprising a character sequence parser, wherein each character sequence is parsed into an object name usable as an emoticon identifier and an emoticon locator.

27. (Original) The custom emoticon engine as recited in claim 26, further comprising a header engine to store an object name in a header of a real-time message.

28. (Original) The custom emoticon engine as recited in claim 26, wherein the custom emoticon engine uses an object store mechanism.

29. (Original) The custom emoticon engine as recited in claim 26, wherein the custom emoticon engine uses an object transport mechanism.

30. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium containing instructions that are executable by a computer to perform actions comprising:

creating an emoticon by selecting an image associated with ~~an~~ the emoticon by a sender;

representing the image as pixels for the emoticon;

assigning a character sequence to the emoticon, wherein the character sequence is assignable by the sender; and

transmitting a text message along with the character sequence to a destination to allow for reconstruction of the emoticon at the destination, wherein the emoticon is to be substituted for the character sequence within the

text message, and both the text message and the emoticon are to be received in the same dialog.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium as recited in claim 30, wherein the character sequence allows real-time mapping to the emoticon.

32. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium as recited in claim 30, further comprising instructions to parse the character sequence into an object name for the emoticon, wherein the object name includes an identifier of the emoticon and a location of the emoticon.

33. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium as recited in claim 30, further comprising instructions to:

transmit the character sequence in a real-time first communication; and

transmit data representing the emoticon in a second communication, wherein the data is used to reconstruct the emoticon in place of the character sequence in the real-time first communication.

34. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium as recited in claim 30, further comprising instructions to:

parse the character sequence into an identifier and a location of the emoticon; and

store the identifier and the location in a header of a message that includes the character sequence.

35. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium as recited in claim 30, further comprising instructions to retrieve the emoticon.

36. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium as recited in claim 35, further comprising instructions to retrieve the emoticon using one of an object store mechanism and an object transport mechanism.